12: Haddon & Start E-4 (no date) 1936 OC6 Iban OC6

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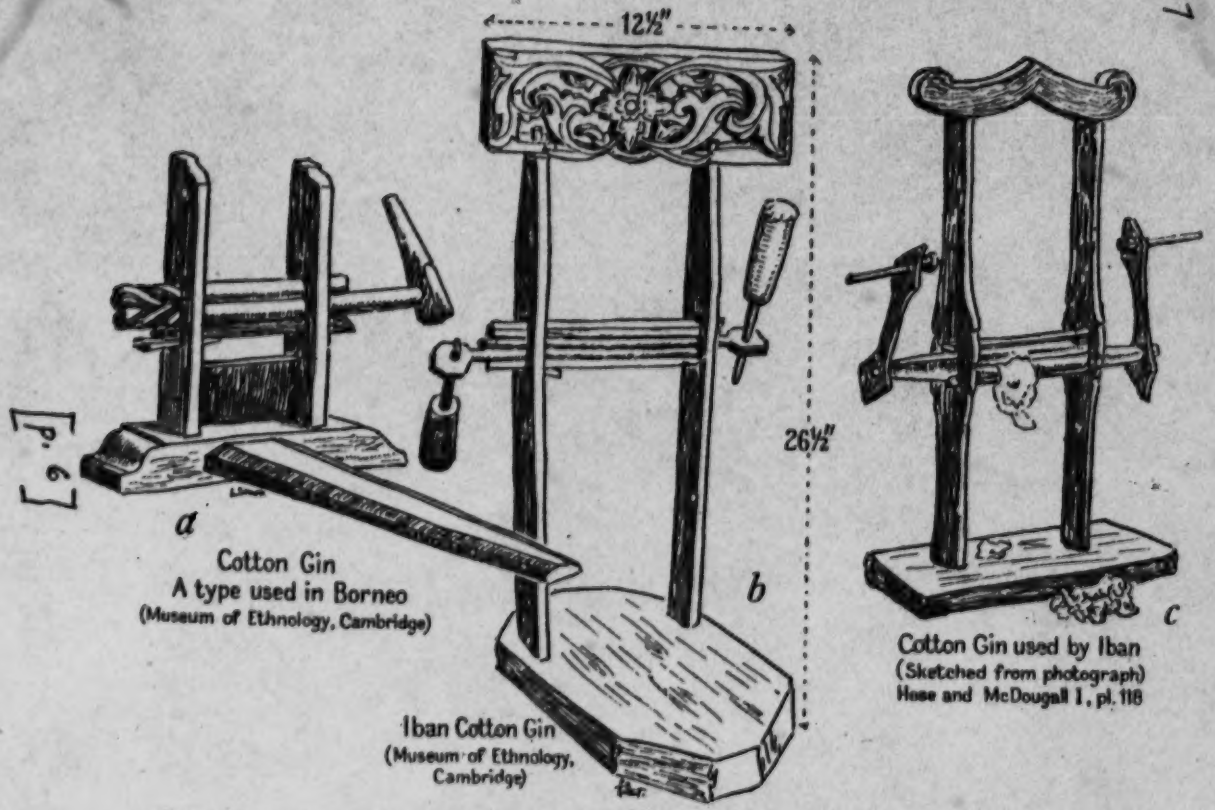

[p. 6]

Fig. 2. Types of cotton gin, *pemigi*, used by the Iban: *a*, *Kilangan kabu-kabu* (Malay), Skeat collection, 336; *b*, Haddon collection, Z. 2352.

out of its skin and dried, it is passed through a cotton gin (*pemigi*) in order to get rid of its seeds" and fragments of husk.

The gin consists of two small wooden rollers which revolve in opposite directions, each with a crank-like handle, fixed into the two upright supports of a frame (fig. 2). Extra strips of wood are generally fixed above and below

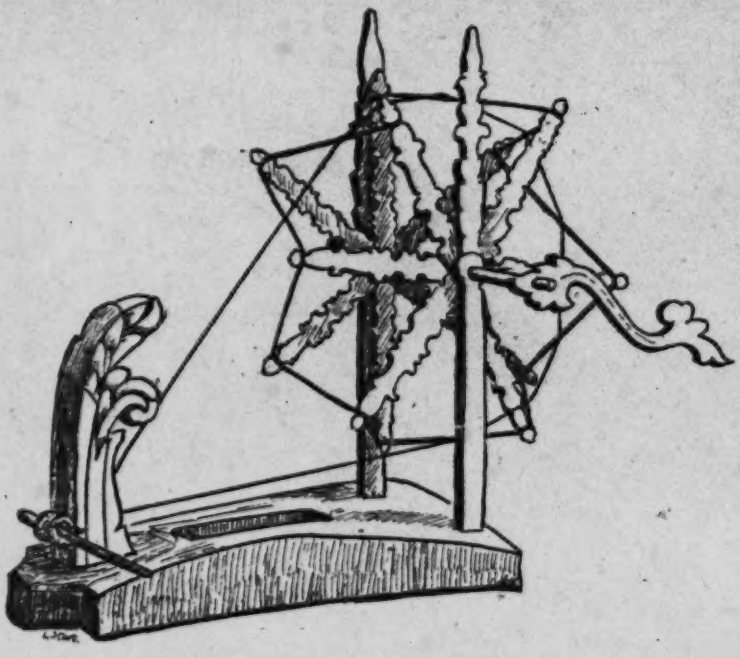

Fig. 3. An Iban spinning wheel, *gasing*. Museum of Ethnology, Cambridge, Haddon collection, Z. 2355.

the rollers to ensure sufficient pressure, and these are tightened by wedges. A similar form of gin is used throughout Indonesia and the Malay peninsula. The yarn is then spun from the mass of fibre.

The simple spinning wheel, *gasing*, is turned by the right hand, the fibre being twisted with the left hand (so Hose and McDougall say, I, p. 221, but their pl. 119, owing to the method of reproduction, shows the reverse

243 After all the families in the longhouse have completed the
176 storage of their padi, one final festival, Muai Ansang, Muai Miang
[782] ("Throwing Off the Padi Dust") is observed. Offerings are made to the gods and spirits, and tuak, rice cakes and other food shared. The purpose of this festival is to denote the completion of all the farm work for another year, and to demonstrate that the people no longer are handling rice (badu' megai padi ka sataun nya'), so that the miang or irritants from the padi don't cling to the workers and they don't become sick (ngambika miang enda' malut kitai agi', lalu kitai enda' sakit).

243 After the tibang has been closed, it cannot be opened until the
[788] next waxing of the moon, for to do so would invite a magical loss of the padi. When the tibang is opened, popped rice (rendai) is scattered over the padi to insure the favor of the samengat padi. The principal woman worker in the bilik then takes a tachu' and gently gathers (ngempuru') the padi that is to be removed. Removing the padi in the tachu' she transfers it to a baka' to be taken down from the sadau for husking.

407 The conventional technique for husking padi is with a two-piece, wooden mill (kisar, v.f. ngisar), into which the padi is poured at the top and falls through a hole onto notched grooves of the lower section. Holding a handle on either side of the upper section, the woman twists the mill back and forth so that the husks are separated as they are forced over the notches of the grooves.

407 Many longhouse communities have access to gasoline-driven rice-mills, usually the property of one individual who mills the rice of [435] other members of the community for a price. For example, at Rumah Gaong, Enchul Apai Jimmy has operated a mill for about ten years, charging M$1.00 per pikul of padi milled. At Rumah Nyala, the Tuai Rumah has a mill and charges M$1.30 per pikul.

3. Division of Labor and Returns

243 462 In the past and at present, a principal portion of farm-work has fallen to women. In areas where shifting cultivation still is practiced, men help with felling trees and clearing the farms at the beginning of the year, and carry the baskets of rice from the fields to the house at the end of the harvest. But the other tasks generally fall to women.

[412] In wet-rice cultivation, men may help spray fields with herbicides where this technique is used, and also share in the hot and onerous job of preparing the soil by chopping it with a pito, a single-edged blade on a three-and-a-half foot handle. Men also help by rolling the fields where the use of drums has been adopted. But the other work of transplanting and weeding are the lot of women.

243 The time that is spent in farming varies considerably from family to family, according to the size of the labor-force and the farm they [433] cultivate. Similarly, the returns vary according to the thoroughness of the workers, the quality of the soil, and the use of fertilizers.